

6. *Hon. Mr. Massey.*] Sumner and New Brighton are exempt now, are they not?—Yes, and we wish them to remain exempt.

7. *Mr. Davey.*] The ten-mile radius would not touch Kaiapoi, would it?—No. I think it would touch Belfast.

8. And Lyttelton?—Yes. There is a very strong feeling that these boundaries should be larger. I notice that the Bill says that where a man in any trade has to close a person carrying on the same class of business within one mile shall, on request sent to the Minister, be compelled to close also. It is felt that that would be a hardship, inasmuch as you may have one man just the mile away and another man a few yards further on, and the latter, being outside the radius, will be open. Thus you will still have confusion. The Christchurch Retailers' Association were all Thursday men, I think, with the exception of myself. Now we are prepared to abide loyally by the decision of the people. Saturday closing, we find, has not meant the loss that we expected it would—not, at any rate, as far as the principal men are concerned. We realize that there are some who are suffering from it, but as far as the bulk of my association are concerned we are quite content to have Saturday. We are an association of nearly a hundred strong. We are pleased, of course, to see that the exemptions are taken out of the Bill, and we hope they will be kept out. We see no reason why the hairdresser or the photographer should keep open; in fact, speaking for myself, I see no reason why chemists should keep open. If it is not necessary for a chemist to keep open on the Saturday it is not necessary for a hairdresser. In our case it is often a matter of life and death; with the hairdresser it is not. We shut regularly, but I have never yet heard of a man dying for want of medicine. There is the question of some of the shops closing which do not employ labour, and which have been keeping open till 8 o'clock. We feel that that is too late, and that the small shopkeeper should not be allowed to keep open longer than the large shopkeeper, and that the closing-hour should be universal. We would like, if possible, supposing that a particular day is carried at two elections in succession, to make that day binding on that district for a certain time. The Retailers' Association of Christchurch want rest. They do not want this constant turmoil and fight. Whether it is to be Thursday or Saturday they are not very particular, as long as they know there is going to be some cessation from this constant fighting. We realize that a lot are suffering from the introduction of the Saturday half-holiday, but it has not had quite the chance it might have had owing to various causes, such as the tightness of the money-market and the constriction of business; and, besides that, the usage of many years has been upset. I can give you, if necessary, the names of firms who have assured me that their takings have not gone down, and they are perfectly satisfied with Saturday. Mr. Kincaid, a large grocer, who put up £25 to fight against Saturday, has no desire to return to it. His business has not fallen off. Mr. Seed, of Petersen and Co., the large jewellers, says that if Thursday is carried in the future he will never go back to it. He has found no falling-off in his business. I could enumerate many more. They are quite satisfied with the Saturday half-holiday. Some of the small men, no doubt, are suffering. The changing of the day has had a different effect from what they thought. Before the vote the suburban men were in favour of Saturday, because they thought that a lot of the trade would be diverted to the suburban shops. Now they find that it has not made the difference they expected, and they are losing.

9. *Hon. Mr. Massey.*] Saturday was the market day in Christchurch, was it not?—No, Wednesday is the sale day.

10. The day for horse-sales, and so on?—It is the day for the horse-sale too, but that is a small thing compared with the cattle-sale. We find that Wednesday has come up very materially. The country people come in on Wednesday. Friday has not taken its place; it is becoming a very much better day. Thursday has turned into a good business day. Taking the week all through Saturday closing has not hurt us at all. We would like, if possible, to have some rest—something positively decided—so that we could do away, if possible, with this fighting every two years. There is another thing that we think should be clearly defined, and that is what constitutes the different classes of trade. We have had this experience in Christchurch: some of the small booksellers and news agents, when Saturday was carried, immediately stocked tobacco as well, and called themselves tobacconists and kept open on Saturday. But they are still carrying on their old business as well. They have come under the exemption clause, and are keeping open on Saturday. That creates friction.

11. Do they sell other things as well as tobacco?—They are selling their old class of goods—books, periodicals, and newspapers. They use the tobacco as a means of getting over the Saturday half-holiday. The position the Inspector has taken up in Christchurch has been this: If a reasonable amount of that stock is carried a man has a perfect right to call himself a tobacconist. These men have laid in that reasonable amount of stock, and they are calling themselves tobacconists, but they are still selling their books and periodicals. Of course, if the tobacconists, as the Bill proposes, do not have exemption, it will obviate all that. We feel that we should all be treated alike. Pork-butchers are selling ham, butter, honey, pickles, &c. Those are not pork-butchers' lines, surely; yet they have a right to keep open. I am not here to raise any objection to the Bill. We want to help the Bill. We want to get something solid, and we want, if possible, to do away with all the friction that has been caused. We do not want to do any man any harm, but we think it is a fair thing that we should all be treated alike, and that there should be no loopholes whereby one man can change his class of business and come in under an exemption. I notice, Mr. Massey, that in your reply to the secretary you mentioned that if the pork-butcher sold pickles he could not claim to be purely a pork-butcher. As long as that is so we are prepared to accept it. Then there is the question of suitable appliances for heating shops. It says that a shop shall be heated to the satisfaction of the Inspector. We feel that that is rather a large order. It is sometimes a very difficult thing to heat a shop or a